



**Statement of Carolyn Maloney
Joint Economic Committee Hearing
February 6, 2009**

The newest job numbers today told Americans something they already knew – things are bad – they are bad all over – in almost every sector of the economy – in almost every section of the country - things are bad and people are hurting.

These numbers add to the overwhelming evidence for getting a recovery package to the President's desk fast. In today's report, we see that even the bright spots are dim.

According to the figures just released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than 3.6 million jobs have been lost since the recession began in December 2007, including the nearly 600,000 jobs shed in January. Given the steady stream of mass layoffs, a credit freeze and a decline in consumer spending, the writing was already on the wall for a devastating 13th month of job losses. The job losses were widespread throughout economy and employers cut jobs at a faster pace last month.

My home state of New York has been especially hard hit, with the highest number of announced layoffs in the country last month. Almost 48,000 jobs were slashed. Macy's cut 7,000 jobs, Estee Lauder trimmed 2,000, Time Warner laid off 1,250, and Bloomberg news announced its first layoffs since it was founded by New York's Mayor 28 years ago.

The Labor Department announced yesterday that initial jobless claims surged to a 17-year high of 626,000 last week and that the number of people on the unemployment rolls ticked up to nearly 4.8 million, the most since records began in 1967. We now hear that the growing rolls of the unemployed are colliding head-on with states who cannot afford to efficiently process their claims.

More than 2 million homes have gone into foreclosure, and millions of other homeowners find themselves owing more to the bank than their homes are worth. Because of these job losses, millions have also lost their health insurance. And an estimated \$6 trillion in personal wealth has simply evaporated since the economic crisis began.

Alarm bells are sounding and our economic recovery package must make its way to the President as soon as possible. The current economic crisis requires bold solutions that address the magnitude of our economic woes, and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan will do just that.

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These jobless numbers today underscore once again that there is no issue that is more important for this government to address than saving and creating jobs. Our recovery package will create or save an estimated 4 million jobs and will make key investments in our future. We will create jobs across a variety of sectors over the next several years, which will soften the downturn and foster a solid economic recovery that benefits all Americans.

First and foremost, we will help families in need by increasing food stamps benefits for some 30 million Americans, expanding unemployment benefits for 18 million Americans, and preserving health care benefits for 20 million Americans.

We have an historic opportunity to make the investments necessary to modernize our public infrastructure, transition to a clean energy economy, and make us more competitive in the future. America's school, roads, bridges, and water systems are in disrepair and this is creating a drag on economic growth.

Our plan also supports working families by providing a \$1,000 'Making Work Pay' tax cut for 95 percent of workers and their families. These families will go out and spend the money, not save it, and help jumpstart local economies right away.

Now is the time to put aside the differences we might have in economic theories and put the needs of our country first. Now is the time to save our economy, not defend the failed policies of the past. We need to stand together for the good of our nation.

President Obama and the Democrats are ready to embark on a bold, common sense plan to turn this economy around, to address the fierce urgency of now, and to get this country back on its feet. Today's numbers underline the need to act, and to act now.

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